

# METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR COMMUNICATING CONFIGURATION INFORMATION OVER A NETWORK

## 5    Abstract

A method and apparatus are provided for passing configuration information over a network. In one embodiment, the configuration information is passed between a DHCP server and a DHCP client and includes parameters not formally defined  
10    within DHCP. The parameters are therefore encoded into a vendor-specific portion of a DHCP message using at least one triplet comprising a code field, a length field, and a value field. The value field comprises a set of one or more name-value pairs. The code field includes an indication of encryption of the value field. In another embodiment, a fixed-function appliance device is attached to a network, and is booted  
15    using boot code and a configuration stored locally to the device. The device then downloads a network configuration, which is compared to the locally stored configuration. If the network configuration is different from the locally stored configuration, the network configuration is stored locally to the device. The device is then rebooted using the stored network configuration.

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